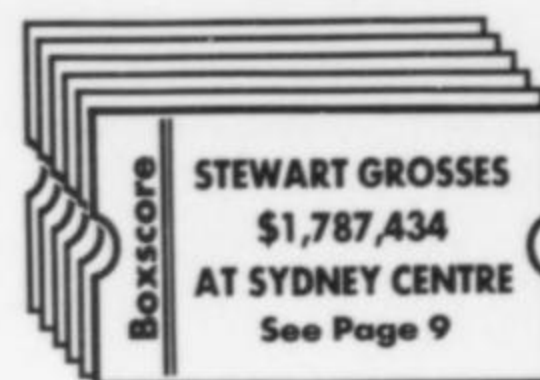


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INSIDE...

AMERIFLORA BEGINS

AmeriFlora, "America's Celebration of Discovery," gets under way April 20 in Columbus, Ohio, with some four million visitors expected to attend. The \$95 million exposition, sanctioned by the Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commission, covers an 88-acre site in downtown Columbus and will feature a variety of entertainment, food and horticulture. See story on Page 22.

FIRST ASIA PACIFIC CONFAB AHEAD

The theme park industry is gearing for the first Asia Pacific Theme Parks & Attractions conference, which gets under way in Singapore April 27-28. The IAAPA's John Graff will deliver the keynote address, and various industry officials from around the world are scheduled to give presentations. See story on Page 18.

CLAPTON HITS THE ROAD

Eric Clapton's U.S. tour kicks off April 25 at Reunion Arena in Dallas, and all indications are that the outing will be a winner: sellouts and near-sellouts have been posted well in advance of the tour's kickoff. See story on Page 6.

NHL ON STRIKE

Arenas hosting National Hockey League teams have a distinct advantage over baseball and football stadiums: when the NHL players went on strike April 1, most arena managers were able to fill newly-opened dates with concerts, family shows and the like. But for some facilities in competitive markets, the strike came too late to book such events. In the meantime, most in the industry are optimistic the strike will be resolved soon. See story on Page 14.

VENUES REPORT RECORD BIZ

The Houston Summit is heralding its best first quarter ever, thanks to ticket sales totaling more than \$11 million — and that's not all because of concerts, says Manager Mike McGee. At the Palace of Auburn Hills, Mich., officials are also crowing about their record March, which saw the building host 484,000 visitors during the month. See stories on Page 11.

ON AB'S BACK COVER

Guy Leavitt, owner of Ray Cammack Shows, is trying to assign game locations at dates through use of a committee. He's set up in Tucson, Ariz. Bates Bros. Amusements opens its season with one of its biggest spots of the year — the I-X Center's Indoor Amusement Park in Cleveland. Plant closings and a bitter strike by Caterpillar employees in his region have C.D.A.C. owner Don Pusey thinking about the economy. Church picnics, shopping center dates and company rentals keep Wagner's Carnival busy in Texas. See stories on Page 32.



FINAL FOUR! — This group enjoyed the Final Four NCAA Basketball Tournament at the Metrodome, Minneapolis. From left: Bill Gappy, Horner Flooring, Dollar Bay, Mich., who installed the floor for the games; Bill Lester, Metrodome GM, who also hosted the Super Bowl and World Series; John Friedmann, executive director of the Jackson County Sports Complex Authority, Kansas City, Mo.; and Ron Gornick, chairman of the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission. (AB Photo)

825,965 Hungry Patrons Turn Out For Dade County Fair

By PATRICIA BATES

Five days of rain at the 41st Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition only whetted the appetites of the 825,965 people that attended the March 19-April 5 event in Miami.

Food and drink brought in \$3,425,764, an 8.24 percent increase over last year's \$3,164,844. That's with only a 1.08 percent increase in attendance from 817,159 in 1991.

"When it began to pour, the crowds

went into the exhibit buildings and underneath the tents and awnings," said Darwin Fuchs, executive vice president of the fair. "The spending on concessions always goes up then." There are no games at the Youth Fair, and the ride per cap for Conklin Shows was about \$4.70 this year, he said.

The final weekend was sunny, and a record-setter with 91,778 on Saturday (April 4) and 84,983 on Sunday. Until that weekend, the total attendance had

been 47,557 below last year's.

Under clear skies, the public ate 52 percent more than on 1991's final Saturday, and 100 percent more on the closing Sunday, said Fuchs. The Youth Fair has international menus. This year, new items included eclairs and muffins from a new gingerbread house trailer.

THE MIDWAY

Conklin Shows grossed \$3,871,044, Continued on Page 21

Wrestlemania VIII
Grosses \$1,241,288
At Hoosier Dome

By RAY WADDELL

INDIANAPOLIS — The World Wrestling Federation (WWF) brought its unique brand of body slamming entertainment to the heartland as Wrestlemania VIII came to the Hoosier Dome here April 5. The event was viewed worldwide on pay-per-view television.

A crowd of 62,167, a virtual sellout, was on hand at the Hoosier Dome,

Continued on Page 12



HEARTLAND HEROICS — Wrestlemania VIII attracted more than 60,000 to Indianapolis' Hoosier Dome on April 5, as well as thousands more on pay-per-view television around the world. From left are Steve Luttazi of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF); Jeff Kline, vice president/general manager for Ticketmaster; Ed Cohen, WWF; and Joe Sassano, programs manager, Joyce Athletic Center, University of Notre Dame. (AB Photo)

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Wrestlemania VIII Grosses \$1,241,288 At Hoosier Dome...

Continued from Page 1

generating a box office gross of \$1,241,288. The attendance was the second largest in the Hoosier Dome's eight-year history.

"This is an unusual event for us because we haven't had a full Dome set-up since 1984," said Michael Fox, operations manager for the Hoosier Dome. "In 1984 we had the Olympic basketball players versus the NBA All-Stars, which filled the house."

WWF production techniques necessitated hanging several tons of equipment from the Dome's air-inflated roof. "It has been up all week," Fox told AB just prior to the event. "We've had zero problems. Everything is perfect. We didn't have to maximize our fans."

The fans and air system for the roof were installed by Birdair. "We consulted them before this event," Fox said. "Without their blessing

and guidance, we wouldn't have been able to pull it off. That was the last wrinkle we had to get ironed out with our contract with the WWF."

The roof supported a horseshoe-shaped lighting tress around three sides of the dome, measuring some 900 feet in length. "That represents almost all of the lighting," Fox said.

"This is a television event and we want it to look good — it's going all around the world. We had to take that into consideration, but we also wanted it to be the best experience possible for the fans in the building. This is the biggest event a building can have, including the Super Bowl and the Final Four. You just can't get any bigger."

Wrestlemania VIII kept with the WWF's desire to be bigger and better each year. "We've got a dou-

ble main event," said Steve Planamenta, media guru for the WWF. "We started out in the Garden (Madison Square Garden, New York), which had been our home since the inception of the WWF. Wrestlemania II was at three different locations."

For Wrestlemania III, the WWF went to the largest place they could find — the Pontiac Silverdome — in the process setting a world indoor attendance record of 93,173. Wrestlemanias IV and V were held in Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, N.J.

Wrestlemania VI ventured out of the country to the Toronto SkyDome for an attendance of more than 67,000. Original plans called for Wrestlemania VII to be held in the Los Angeles Coliseum, but security considerations caused by the

Continued on Page 13



WWF superstar Jake "The Snake" Roberts, center, tells what he plans to do to Undertaker as wrestlers Hacksaw Jim Duggan, left, and The Model Rick Martel look on. This took place at a special "Bacon, Bagels and Biceps Brunch."



Barney Levensgood, right, director of the Indiana Convention Center & Hoosier Dome, was pleased with Wrestlemania VIII, which attracted the second largest crowd in the history of the Hoosier Dome. With Levensgood is Councilman Frank Short.

Wrestlemania VIII The Hoosier Dome, Indianapolis, April 5

(AB Photos)



It was a busy day for Mike Fox, right, operations manager for the Hoosier Dome, who oversaw the whole event, with the able assistance of the WWF. With Fox is Jon Larson, an intern.



Jim Masone, left, general manager for Service America at the Hoosier Dome, was happy with the huge concessions and merchandise sales during the event. With Masone is Beverly Totten, director of marketing and sales for the Hoosier Dome, and Michael Benosky, region general manager for Service America.



Observing Wrestlemania VIII from a luxury suite point of view were, from left, Ellen Robinowitch, special services manager, Steve Hartman, assistant director, and Christine Wattles, special services assistant.

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